



Government of the United States Virgin Islands

Public Services Commission

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PSC Regular Meeting and Public Hearing

The Virgin Islands Public Services Commission (PSC) held a Regular Meeting and Public Hearing today, Tuesday, March 14, 2023. The Commission immediately rose into executive session, discussing several financial and legal matters. Liberty Mobile/Broadband VI, Viya dba VITELCO, and the Virgin Islands Water and Power Authority (WAPA) came before the Commission to provide testimony and updates on pending matters.

Liberty's General Manager, Bala Balakrishnan, reported on their planned build-out of Connect USVI Fund and the challenges they faced with getting the necessary permitting to proceed with projects. Mr. Balakrishnan expressed that these delays could potentially hamper the funding necessary to complete these projects. The Connect USVI Fund grant makes \$84M available over the next decade, combined with Liberty/Broadband VI's own investment, to construct a new landline system capable of carrying highspeed internet, streaming television and voice communications. Liberty/Broadband has deadlines that it must meet in building that network to retain the funding.

Viya's (VITELCO) Petition for Forbearance, filed in December 2022 to relieve the company's territorial telephone operations from rate regulations and other requirements not applied to other telecommunication carriers, was discussed, but no decisions regarding the Petition were made.

On Energy Matters, the Commission approved two PPAs (Power Purchase Agreements) between WAPA and Advance Power to provide alternative wind generation on the islands of St. Thomas and St. Croix. These new PPAs provide the opportunity for more than 15 MW of wind power on St. Thomas and 29 MW on St. Croix, at a cost of about 11 cents per kWh. Those projects, including property leases and permitting, can be constructed in 24 months. Fuel savings to WAPA could be in the range of \$40M per year.

The current Water LEAC is due to expire on March 30, 2023; therefore, the Commission voted to extend the current rate until July 15, 2023. The Commission anticipates receiving WAPA's formal filing of the Water LEAC as soon as WAPA complies with requirements of Ratepayers' Bill of Rights.

All four Commission members (David Hughes, Pedro Williams, Andrew Rutnik, and Raymond Williams) and one of our newly appointed ex-officio members from the 35th Legislature, Senator Carla Joseph, were in attendance. Ex-officio member Senator Marise James was absent from the meeting.

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